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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses some practical and theoretical aspects and problems of curriculum change and reform with a focus on the formal and informal power structure in professional Swedish education. Special attention is also paid to how teachers use a widened scope of action in curriculum planning and setting standards. It explains the formation of an integrated higher educational bureaucracy unified by educational institutions and programs, including but not limited to teacher and nursing education. Reform and change are characterized by decentralization, professional standard setting, interdisciplinary research, a unified formalized admission system, local decision-making and control, application of knowledge examinations, the promotion of professional development, and a diffusion of political power and influence in educational policy among teachers, students and special interest groups. Five pages of notes and references are appended. (JAM)

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WHO EXERTS INFLUENCE ON EDUCATIONAL CHANGES - IN THEORY AND IN PRACTICE ?

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I. BACKGROUND

1. Some recent reforms

The Swedish reform of higher education in 1977 was designed to create a unified higher education system by combining institutions and educational programmes which had previously been administered separately. The higher education system now includes not only traditional university studies but also post-secondary professional education, such as the education of teachers (i.e. preschool teachers and primary school teachers) and the education of paramedical personnel (i.e. nurses).

From an organizational point of view the reform meant, as far as teacher education is concerned, that the former teacher training colleges and schools of education were brought together into an integrated higher education organization. As before the reform, they are administered by the State, but now under the same board as the universities (the National Board of Universities and Colleges - UHÄ). Formerly they were administered under the same board as the compulsory and upper secondary school (the National Board of Education - SÖ), an arrangement that reflected the traditional relationship between the school system and teacher education and the view that the State had the responsibility for the education of teachers as a consequence of its responsibility for the school system. At the same time it reflected the concept of teacher education as a professional education separated from the academic sphere.

Nursing education has traditionally been administered and financed by the local counties and connected to the county hospitals, although they have got grants from the State. Before the reform nursing schools were under the supervision of the National Board of Education and nursing education was, to a still higher degree than teacher education, regarded as a non-academic professional education.

As before the reform the pattern of teacher and nursing education varies from one higher education establishment to another with reference to the number of different training programmes and number of students. Instruction is still provided in the same buildings and the teaching staff was incorporated in 1977 into the new organization with no particular changes. This means that the external conditions, that determine the physical environment of the training are still very much the same as before the reform.

With reference to teacher and nursing education the great differences, that were caused by the reform, are found in 1) the administration system, which is now characterized by an extensive decentralization of pedagogical as well as economic responsibilities, 2) the articulated ambition to develop research connections between these professional trainings and the universities and to organize the studies on a scientific basis, and 3) the admission system which is highly formalised and unified.

Before the reform of higher education, teacher and nursing education was subject to a great deal of central control via detailed timetables, syllabuses and different kinds of regulations by the National Board of Education (SÖ). The decentralization of decisionmaking in 1977 meant that planning, implementation and evaluation are local responsibilities. The National Board of Universities and Colleges (UHÄ) has drawn up nationally valid central study programme syllabuses for the general study programmes. These central syllabuses lay down guidelines, specify goals, content and structure and regulations about required background knowledge etc, but they do not go into details, for example, concerning the number of lessons allocated to individual subjects. More detailed local syllabuses and curricula, in which the programmes have to be divided into courses, are worked out at each individual establishment by the study programme committees. These committees include representatives of the professions as well as teachers and students.

The former very detailed, closely-regulated curricula from the National Board of Education have thus now been replaced by syllabuses that give room for local decision-making and control, which

means that State interference, at least with respect to the strength of goal documents, is not very extensive. Instead, the influence is distributed amongst representatives of teachers, students and working life and the local influence is, at least in theory, not only shared by these interest groups but also strenghtened in relation to the State.

An important goal of all higher education is to prepare the students for working life. For professional education, as teacher and nursing education, this goal does not mean any real change. The Higher Education Act, however, also stresses that higher education should impart the ability to think analytically, to contribute to personal development and to promote international understanding. The studies in the different programmes should be scientifically based.

This meant that although the higher education reform was primarily regarded as an organizational reform, there were expectations of changes in teacher and nursing education with reference to the structure, the general approach, the content and the study methods of the programmes. The widened scope of action, which the reform has allowed on the local level, thus ought to be used to encourage rather extensive curricular changes.

As regards primary teacher education, the National Board of Universities and Colleges as well as the local programme committees expected changes of the programme structures towards more integrated, interdisciplinary organized training programmes. For several years there was widespread dissatisfaction with the primary teacher training programme, which was considered to be too subject oriented and too fragmented. Up to the reform in 1977, the detailed central syllabus and the regulations from the National Board of Education were regarded as the scapegoat for the lack of changes towards a more integrated curriculum. The new central study programme syllabus and the increased local influence were accordingly greeted with approval.

As regards pre-school teacher education and nursing education, the higher education reform was introduced at the same time as rather extensive reforms came into force (as the pre-school teacher education in 1977) or were proposed (as the nursing education, which was reformed as from 1982).
These reforms were therefore, quite contrary to what has previously been the rule in Sweden, to be implemented in a decentralized organization.

In other words, there were expectations of changes in primary teacher training programmes, although there were no formal demands for changes by way of a reform of the education as such. On the other hand, during the years after 1977 pre-school teacher training schools and nursing training schools, were asked to change the programmes according to reforms, adopted by Parliament.

All programmes and courses in the higher education system have a limited number of study places. Meeting the entrance requirements is therefore not enough to guarantee admission. For general study programmes (as teacher and nursing education) the applicants are selected on the basis of their qualifications. Both the applicants' school results and their work experience are taken into consideration. Admissions are administrated centrally and the selection to the different programmes is a technical procedure in which no allowance can be made for such factors as personal suitability for the teaching or nursing profession. As there are no final examinations when the pupils leave upper secondary school and no intermediary body (preparatory college) between upper secondary school and higher education, with the task of assessing candidates for the higher level, the upper secondary school does the grading that forms the basis for the selection. The selection is thus solely based on school marks and the length of work experience. (For admission to nursing education, the nursing line in upper secondary school or similar knowledge in nursing theory and practice is required, which means that the students are trained as nursing assistants when they enter the nursing education training programmes).

The admission system gives thus no fixed points or levels for entrance to the general study programmes other than that the student has to meet the general and special requirements that are set up for the study programmes. When a programme is popular or when the number of places is highly restricted the level of entrance requirements (expressed in means of grades and/or in amount of working life experiences) may rise; when the number of study places is increased, e.g. to meet a particular demand of manpower in a specific occupational sector, or when a particular programme or profession has become less attractive, the level of the entrance requirement may fall.

This variation of the entrance levels has the consequence that the students' qualifications may vary from year to year in a way that is out of the control of the teachers and also sometimes rather unforeseen by the administrators.

2. Purpose of the paper

The purpose of this paper is to discuss some aspects of curriculum changes and reform implementations, with special reference to the formal and informal power structure in professional education and with special attention paid to how teachers use a widened scope of action in curriculum planning and in setting the standards.

The substance of the chapter is derived from evaluation projects, commissioned by the National Board of Universities and Colleges and from experiences from preschool and primary school teacher training (1). In view of the limited space the findings and experiences will naturally be both simplified and somewhat epitomized.

3. The evaluation projects

The evaluation studies have focused on expected and suggested changes in the training programmes as consequences of the decentralization in the higher education system in 1977 and on recommended changes in preschool teacher training and in nursing training in accordance with training programme reforms in 1977 and 1982 respectively.

The definitive outcome of an educational reform is almost impossible to evaluate and isolate in terms of means and ends, causes and effects. Besides, many evalutation studies are, for several reasons, carried out within a shorter time-span than is required if the outcome is to be estimated with regard to how and to what extent students put their knowledge and their training experiences into practice. The implementation phase may, however, be studied with respect to how political and educational intentions and concepts are interpreted and transmitted and how various frames, physically existing or emotionally experienced, will affect the conversion of intentions to actual teaching. Reforms may also be studied with respect to how teachers' relations to members in the staff, their "position" in the staff and experiences of their own teaching tasks and their identity as teachers will affect the actual teaching process. (2).
Reactions from the planning procedures can be studied, the correspondence between documents and activities in the current training programmes can be pointed out, the relation between the teachers' attitudes towards the students' background knowledge and the students' passing rates can be observed. An evaluation study may expose critical issues in professional training programmes and in the very nature of structural and curricular changes.

The projects aimed at studying the implementation phases of the decentalized decision-making system and the curricular changes in primary teacher training, pre-school teacher training and nursing training. The basic purpose is obvious: The State interference was reduced but the National Board anyhow had an overall responsibility for

a) giving support to the school units in their efforts to improve the programmes
b) controlling the quality of the programmes.

Since the leaving marks function as the "entrance tickets" to the respective professional fields, there are expectations of equivalence between different schools. The reduction of interference was thus compensated - in a rather unobtrusive way by the introduction of the evaluation projects. The intention was to get informations of "how it functions" in order to intervene if necessary.

The projects have been conducted largely through examinations of local documents, interwievs with memberg of the local programme committees and questionnaires to students.

4. Theoretical framework

Reforms, either structural or curricular, operate as starting signals for movements and reactions, which sometimes result in real alterations in the teaching and evaluation processes but rather frequently result in an absence of expected change. Whatever is the visible outcome it may be suggested that a close examination of what is going on and what are the real effects, will throw some light on characteristic issues in professional education and curriculum changes.

Structural changes - such as incorporation of the professional education into the higher education system - will therefore give rise to curriculum changes that sometimes may be both indirect and unforeseen. Curriculum changes - such as extending the theoretical courses or introducing a scientific basis - will bring about teacher and student reactions that may be quite unpredictable and that are quite contrary to what was expected.

The complex network of interrelated structural, personal and curricular factors that provide the educational culture had thus to be considered as well as the organisational and structural fac-

tors that define the tasks of the institutions and determine the actual conditions for fulfilling the tasks. (3). This means that a "top down" as well as a "bottom up" perspective ought to be used in order to get an understanding of what was actually going on during an implementation phase. (4)

In the evaluation studies, the curriculum planning processes and the settings of standards have been studied with respect to how political and educational intentions and concepts are interpreted and transmitted and how various frames, existing or experienced, affect the conversion of intentions to teaching.

In Sweden, a structural perspective on educational processes have been introduced by Dahllöf and Lundgren by the so called frame factor theory (5). Organizational frames (such as time limit, class size) do not determine but delimit the actual teaching process and the outcome. Many of the frames are manipulated above the teachers and taught and express a certain power relation to the state apparatus.

In the evaluation studies a structural, frame-factor perspective has been combined with an interactionistic one and Bernstein's as well as Bourdieu's concepts and theoretical models have been used in order to analyse the distribution of power and control among the local programme committees, the teachers and the students and between the State and the local levels.

The widened scope of action was expected to be used for curricular changes in the direction of more interdisciplinary and integrated courses. Bernsteins distinction between collection code and integrated code and his theoretical framework offer useful conceptual tools for an analysis of what happens when the central syllabuses are to be interpreded and turned into local plans and teaching activities. (6)

In order to explain how power and control are transformed in educational institutions Bernstein uses the concepts of classification and framing. The concept of classification refers to the differentiation of contents, i.e. to the principles according to

which the curriculum is constructed. If contents stand in a closed relation to each other, that is, if the contents are clearly bounded and insulated from each other, they are strongly classified. Such a curriculum is called a collection type. If the contents stand in an open relation to each other they have a weak classification. Such a curriculum is called integrated. A move from collection to integrated code may bring about a disturbance in the structure and distribution of power and in existing specific educational identities.

A central concept in the theoretical framework of Bourdieu is "habitus", which can be defined as a system of dispositions. (7) At the same time as it integrates all previous experiences of the individual it functions as a matrix for how the individual understands, evaluates and acts. In "social fields" the individuals act to pretend their own position as well as the balance of the power stucture in the field.

According to Bernstein and Bourdieu the authonomy of the individual is more or less obviously restricted by a variety of structural factors originating from the culture around the individual, from society or from the State. These factors reflect, in an more or less symbolic way, the patterns of intellectual, cultural, economic and juridical-political power structures.

II. FINDINGS

5. Curriculum changes

With regard to the planning activities set out by local programme committees and teachers and the outcomes of these activities, there are some striking similarities between the training programmes but there are also some clear differences. The similarities and differences may throw a new light on some fundamental characteristics in professional education and in reform implementations. (8)

According to the general study programme syllabuses of teacher and nursing education, the programmes should be designed to meet the general goals laid down for higher education. The syllabuses also advocate the need for a more interdisciplinary approach to the theoretical studies. It is also stressed that the training schools are responsible for encouraging the willingness to cooperate and function within a team. In addition, the training programmes aim at developing a holistic appreciation of man and society.

These ambitious aims have changed and extended the tasks of the training schools from just transmitting well structured knowledge in a traditional school manner to giving the students the opportunities of a more active and holistic approach to knowledge. The local programme committees have in general met these aims with approval and as invitations to change the traditional subject bound patterns of the programmes. When the local programme committees have suggested more integrated approaches in the syllabuses, they have not only been influenced by the current pedagogical debate but also eager to find ways of manifesting the desired research connections and the raising of the educational levels. The new "academic" organizational context was experienced as a challenge to get rid of the reputation of being much too "schoolish".

According to the Higher Education Ordinance the training programmes should be divided into courses and the duration and extent of

the courses be expressed in a system of points (One term of full-time studies corresponds to 20 points). The programme committees have with a few exceptions replaced the former subject bound syllabuses and timetables with broad interdisciplinary courses. The new syllabuses are thus characterised by, what Bernstein calls, an integrated code (9). This code is, however, in many programmes more apparent in the documents than in the current curriculum and in the teachers' timetables.

The representatives of the teachers, the students and professional fields in the programme committees have as a rule carried out an impressive amount of study programme writing and planning work. However, the planning work has caused a lot of trouble, to which in many cases emotional overtones have been added. Very few of the programme committees have realized that they have been faced with curriculum problems, which have their origins in combinations of external and internal factors. In a discipline based course principles of selection and structure of content and teaching strategies are subordinated to the well-established tradition of the discipline itself. In other words, the point of reference is within the discipline. In interdisciplinary courses, on the other hand, the point of reference for selection and structure of the appropriate knowledge has to be found in a common idea or policy of how to carry out the professional training or the profession itself.

Although the programme committees have been eager to realize an integrated code, they have experienced great difficulties in finding the appropriate point of reference that is agreed upon by all members of the staff. These difficulties have been much more articulated in primary teacher education than in either preschool education or nursing education.

The planning proposals of the programme committees in primary teacher education - if they meant changes in relation to the educational planning that was applied before the reform - hardly met with approval. The programme committees seemed to find it difficult to exercise any kind of influence and the teacher representatives in the committees were faced with accusations of threate-

ning their fellow-teachers' autonomy. Drafts of syllabuses were rejected and endless discussions were started. Every attempt to break up the strict classification and the strict framing (according to Bernstein) was met with suspicion or opposition.

When primary teacher education is made into a curriculum problem, it is obvious that the committees can hardly present any clearcut solutions. There are many kinds of ambiguities: What are the qualities of a good teacher and how can they be developed? How should teaching in the compulsory school be organized and carried out in relation to the overall aim of that school?

Against this background it is not surprising that the committees found it difficult to gain a hearing for such changes in the training programme that meant that individual lecturers would have to change ingrained routines and ideas of how the training should be carried out. The training contains so many contradictory elements that it is hardly possible to be able to convince someone of being wrong in his idea of how teacher training should be structured and accomplished.

The experiences from primary teacher education suggest that a widened scope of action and an overall expectation of pedagogical change do not automatically give the incitement for curriculum changes when these changes will affect everyone's point of reference and "private zone" in the training programme. When the suggested new point of reference, besides, has to correspond to the current activities of the problematic and sometimes criticized compulsory schools, many lecturers in the theoretical courses hesitate or offer resistance to the changes.

The experiences of pre-school teacher training and from nursery training show that the reforms of the training programmes have been interpreted by the teachers as opportunities to influence forthcoming development in professional areas and thus as a challenge. The planning activities have not met the same oppositions as was the case in primary teacher education. The teachers have accepted and also initiated a lot of cooperation and coordination across the subject boundaries. But as a matter of fact, they have

gradually realized that an integrated code curriculum is easier to plan than to carry out in teaching. It is also obvious that the planning committees and the teachers have been much more occupied with the planning within the theoretical study courses than with coordination of the theoretical and the practical training courses.

Thus, when the study programmes in pre-school teacher training and nursery training are to be reformed with the purpose of bringing the programmes into line with changed - but not yet achieved - policy goals for the professions and when the training schools have got the roles of spokesmen, the point of reference is quite apparent in various documents (committee reports, propositions, central study programme syllabuses). Such a point of reference may be questioned, but since the goals have not yet been achieved no one can argue that the point is absolutely wrong. Although the goals are presented in rather abstract words, they appear to be more absolute and obvious than the complicated reality and thus useful as a point of reference in a curriculum planning.

One can question, whether the decentralization of decision-making power has made way for real curriculum changes. The planning procedures on the local level have been more extensive and overt than before the reform and negotiations between various interest groups and between coteries in the staff have been more frequent. Although the planning committees have quite a large influence on local planning, and have taken over quite a lot of the authority that was formerly exerted by the State, the real influence seems to be exerted by the teachers, who have the power to accept or reject changes that will affect their working situation and conditions.

Hitherto, the differences in planning activities and in teacher reactions have been discussed as a matter of selecting a point of reference that is obvious to everyone on the staff and undisputable. It has been suggested that a point in a distant and desirable future is easier to agree upon than a point in the present reality.

It may also be suggested that curriculum changes take place, at least on the planning level, when there is an external pressure to change (10). While primary teacher training programmes were expected to be improved in an overall way by changing current structure and teaching methods as the scope of action was widened, changes in pre-school and nursing training programmes were required by Acts of Parliament.

The point of reference that is selected and the pressure that is exerted, must however also be interpreted from the teachers' view point and with regard to how the teachers' working conditions and relations to each other will be affected. With this perspective in mind, some further differences appear between primary tacher training on the one hand and pre-school teacher traning and nursing training on the other hand.

Although by tradition they all have been strictly regulated by subject-based syllabuses and time-tables, they prepare for professions that are more or less subdivided into the same kind of activities as are the training programmes. Hence, lecturers in primary teacher training may not only retain their loyalties and frames of references to their disciplines (as lecturers in the other training programmes may do as well) when they decline to cooperate in integrated courses. They may also act as defenders of the position and autonomy of their subjects in school and thus be very reluctant to accept interdisciplinary courses, not only for their own sake but for the sake of the subject as well.

Primary school teaching in Sweden is a class-teaching job, which means that the prospective teacher has to be prepared for teaching in a great variety of subjects. This also means that the teacher education staff will include not only subject-specialized lecturers but also lecturers in educational research and psychology and in teaching methods. Except for the lecturers in teaching methods, the members of staff are postgraduates and have experiences of research work, although many of them, unfortunately, have lost an active relation to researchers and research departments. As has been mentioned earlier in this paper, the higher education reform aimed at improving the connections be-

tween professional education and the research fields, but did not bring about any changes in localisation. Steps were taken to improve such links, but they were concentrated on activities that should facilitate for the lecturers in teaching methods (the ones who had no previous experience of research) to get in touch with research work. For the main group of lecturers in theoretical courses, the higher education reform thus came to expose their lack of research connection and research activities and also made it clear to them that many research paradigms had changed, findings that did not make their attitudes towards changes in the training programmes more positive.
The winners of the reform - in primary school teacher training - were the lecturers in teaching methods but they were too few and had too low "status" to dominate the planning settings.

In pre-school teacher education and in nursing education the staff is not so dominated by "academic" lecturers. The reforms of these programmes also aim at creating new professional attitudes and skills in pre-schools and in health care. The lecturers in teaching methods and nursing respectively, have hence got more central positions in interpreting the goals of the programmes and in suggesting the appropriate training courses. The creation of new training programmes have gone hand in hand with the ambitions of these lecturers to improve their own teaching capacity by postgraduate studies and, as far as nursing education in concerned, to create a new field of research (nursing science) and a new subject in nursing education (nursing).
The widened scope of action in these trainings has been used by the lecturs that are closest to the professional fields, but they have not used the scope in order to improve the connection between the theoretical and the practical courses but to create a new point of reference for the theoretical courses and new scientific foundations for the programmes. In doing so they have in a way accentuated the borderline between theoretical and practical training and also between current activities in preschool and health care on the one hand and how these activities ought to be carried out on the other hand.

In the studied professional trainings the teachers seem to be the ones who lay down the conditions for the planning and thus seem to exert the real influence over the planning committees and the local planning activities. But contrary to the outcomes in primary teacher education, in preschool teacher education and in nursing education the curricula seem to be set by the method teachers and nursing teachers respectively: They are nearest the point of reference in the integrated code, they have gained prestige by the higher education reform and by number they also dominate the staff.

To sum up the experiences from the planning activities during the years after the higher education reform, it can be suggested that the formal local syllabuses express an integrated curriculum code, but that the teachers are more or less reluctant to accept that code, when the code is to be realized in the teaching situation. It can also be suggested that the courses in the syllabuses are more or less loose constructions of separate subject studies under a common heading or more or less firm compositions of interdisciplinary studies with a shared theme.

Although there is a main difference between the primary teacher training programme on the one hand and the preschool teacher training and nursing training on the other hand in the lecturers' attitudes towards interdisciplinary courses and in their willingness to let the intentions in the syllabuses influence the teaching processes in the lessons, the differences between individual teachers on a certain staff must also be considered.

And furthermore, as an illustration of the classical "black-box" phenomenon, there is sometimes a great discrepancy between a teacher's expressed intentions in his or her teaching and the actual teaching behaviour that is exposed. From what is heard from teachers as well as students, it is clear that the plans do not always influence the teaching process in an expected way, and consequently it can be suggested that educational reality does not always correspond to the educational documents. (11)

6. Examination changes

The overall pupose of the professional study programmes is to prepare the students for their professional work in a way that will give a foundation for satisfactory professional behaviour and a capacity to take part in the development of the profession and the professional field in accordance with present and future demands. The outcome of the training programmes and any effects that may occur after curriculum changes, will however not be apparent until several years after the changes have taken place and at that time it will be impossible to distinguish and establish any relationship between a certain cause and a certain effect. (12)

As a consequence, many educational reforms are evaluated by studying the examination results from the training programmes that have been subject to changes. Such an evaluation strategy presumes that the examination system has so much stability that it can be used for comparison from one year to another and of one student group to another. i.e. by a central examination system, which gives an opportunity to estimate the students' result against a national standard.

Such nation-wide examinations have not been the rule in Sweden for these training programmes. Formerly, there were final exams, covering the whole of the study programmes and including written as well as oral test. These tests were, however, set by the teachers in the respective training school and they were in general as subject bound as the programmes themselves.

Final exams disappeared many years ago in these training programmes and the leaving certificates were instead based upon ratings and appraisals of the students' achievements during the whole programme. Final assessments of the students was thus replaced by continuos assessment.
During the last fifteen years there has been a remarkable shift in the examination pattern considering the modes of examination. Written tests with the aim of measuring the amount of facts and subject knowledge have been replaced by tests and reports, which

aim at measuring the students' capacity to apply their knowledge. Individual tests and reports have, besides, been replaced by group discussions and group tests.

This shift reflects a new concept of what is valid knowledge in professional education and how knowledge is used in professional work. It also reflects the prevalent assumption that professional development and personal development are one and the same or at least intimately related to each other. (13)

From the teachers' point of view, the new mode of testing has caused a lot of trouble and frustration of how to keep proper control of the students' performance and achievements. The teachers have found it difficult to behave as demanding and controlling teachers at the same time as they are supposed to be supporting the students in their personal development, a teacher task that will need a more therapeutic approach than conventional teaching calls for.

A high percentage of students in teacher and nursing training were passing their exams within scheduled time, a simple fact that might indicate that the examination system had "softened" while it was being changed. But it might indicate as well that the students entrance qualifications, when the training programmes started, were fairly good. No clearcut evidence is at hand to support one or the other of the suggestions, but there are facts that give clues to certain assumptions.

Primary school education and nursing education have been very popular and the number of students has been restricted compared to the number of applicants. However, during the last years the popularity of nursing education has declined. Preschool teacher education has been very popular too, but the number of student places has been extended to meet the demands of an expanding preschool sector. The entrance qualifications of the students may then have varied between the programmes and the overall high rate of throughput may have concealed fairly different teaching processes and standards.

As a matter of fact, as long as the former subject divided curricula were in force, the examinations, whatever the type that was chosen, were subject bound and carried out by the single subject teachers. They were responsible for setting the marks in their own subjects.

According to the Higher Education Ordinance of 1977 all courses include examinations, written or oral. The overall grade of the course is determined by the results of these exams and the student's participation in the work of the class. There are, as before, no final exams which cover the whole, or even the greater part, of a study programme. There are two possible awards: "fail" or "pass". There are no graded marks.
The course examinations are thus set by the teachers, who are involved in the courses. From their interpretations of the aims of the courses and in accordance with what is stipulated in the course syllabuses, they have to find a common basis for evaluating the students' achievement in the course. The examinations, as well as the syllabuses, are now course based.

From a reform evaluation perspective there is still a lack of nation - wide examinations and there is no national standard. All that is available is information from the schools about throughput and examination rate in the training programmes.

The preliminary findings of a questionnaire survey, recently carried out in a few nursing training schools among teachers and students, can together with expressed reactions from teachers and students in other training programmes, throw light upon the complicated interaction between admission rules and entrance qualifications, the setting of standards and examination rates. (14)

The majority of students in nursing training schools have considered the standards that have been set up and the demands that have been stressed (as far as their theoretical studies are concerned) as appropriate or too low in relation to their previous education in upper secondary schools and their estimates of what their future professional careers will require. Some of them have also found the choice of topics in the theoretical courses some-

what "unrealistic" compared to their experiences in the practical courses. Only a few of them have felt need for extra support. Most of them are now sitting their exams within the scheduled time, a simple fact that confirms their statements about the standards.

Their teachers give a quite different picture. Although they have worked hard in planning the courses, and despite their great efforts to implement the intentions draw up in the study programme syllabuses they have experienced great difficulties and disappointments when their intentions were to be transmitted into teaching practice. To a great extent they have then considered their teaching difficulties caused by the great differences in the students' levels. The students have not fitted into the outlined pedagogics, when the step was to be taken from programme visions to real lessons.

The teachers in nursing training schools have planned for a implementation of a reform with another group of students in mind than those they actually received. They had started from a wrong assumption of the students qualifications and their misjudgement had at least two different sources. Contemporary changes in the curriculum of the upper secondary school had influenced the level of skills and knowledge in particular subjects e.g. in the Nursing line. The decreased popularity of nursing education among students had affected the number of applicants and thus the qualification level of the students who had been admitted to the programmes.

From the primary teacher and preschool teacher education the findings are similar, although they are collected in a more unsystematic and informal way. The new admission rules, the low standards among the students in upper secondary school and the shift in the students' preferences have led to the result that the students do not fit the syllabuses that have been worked out with such great strain and effort.

The admission rules have evidently caused a lot of trouble but these rules cannot be held responsible for all the problems that

have arisen. The shift from subject based to course based syllabuses also meant a shift from subject based to course based examinations. The teachers' unwillingsness or inability to exert a stricter control may, at least partly, be caused by a loss of ingrained criteria of what is a proper standard, when the standards are to be expressed in accordance with stipulated aims of courses and not in traditional aims of subjects. Besides, the stress on promotion of personal development as a general goal for higher education and the aim of developing a holistic appreciation of man may also have restrained the teachers from acting with authority towards the students.

III. DISCUSSION

8. A heterogenius collection of assumptions

All education with the purpose of preparing for professional work emanates, in one way or another, from the assumption that education is "good" and that there is a more or less close connection between what is taugh to prospective professionals and their subsequent behaviour when professionally active. Although there has been a lot of research in this field, we still know little about the types of experiences best calculated to result in professional growth (15). More is known about professional socialization than about professional learning (16). Therefore, very little is known about the best way of structuring and carrying out a professional training programme. This lack of knowledge also implies that any standard solutions hardly are at hand when reforms are to be implemented or when changes are to be carried out.

The transformation of the universities from institutions of elite education to those of mass education has been a characteristic feature in Sweden, as in many other countries, during the last 30 years. From the perspective of the professional education the entrance into the higher education system is usually regarded as the latest step in a series of improvements. The study programme has gradually been extended, the admission requirements have been raised, the contribution of theoretical courses has been increased and links between professional education and research have been established. This development towards more study time, more background knowledge, more academic approaches may be regarded as a quantitative change in the training programmes with the aim of improving the quality of professional education.

As means for quality improvements, however, these improvements have to be transformed into teaching and practice activities in the training programmes via curriculum reforms. Although such improvements, as a rule, have been met with approval when introduced as organisational or quantitative changes, they have given rise to rather extensive qualitative changes, and these latter

changes have not always been considered as improvements by those who are involved and thus not been met with the same amount of approval. It may however be suggested that the improvements have tended not only to conceal some of the enduring, unresolved difficulties in professional education but, as a matter of fact, also to aggravate them.

Many professional programmes, such as teacher training and nursing training, have their roots in apprenticeship training. Following the general expansion of the educational system they have moved "upwards" in the system and been more and more loaded with theoretical and abstract content. At the same time the relations to the professional field have been further complicated.

The apprenticeship tradition is in many respects still alive from the view of the students, when they are asking for "survival kits" and when they are conceiving the theoretical studies as irrelevant to practical work, carrying directives that are too general for action. (17)

Two kinds of knowledge have to be related to each other and integrated into professional education - professional and academic knowledge, which means that there are two aspects of curriculum work in professional education: the relation between academic knowledge and practical training (the theory/practice-relation) and the amount, level and structure of the subject studies (the subject/discipline-relation).
These relations are further complicated by the fact that there is a fundamental lack of agreement in many professional trainings of what is the appropriate academic knowledge and from what discipline and research field this knowledge is to be derived.

The shift from apprenticeship training to the scientifically based training of today has been slow and gradual and, besides, presumably rather imperceptible and unconscious for those who have their daily work at these schools. It may then be suggested that members of staff can hold a heterogeneous collection of conceptions and ideas of how to prepare for professional work and how to work in the profession. The fact that the training schools

have now moved into the higher education system, does not guarantee that the modes of the teachers have made a contemporary and uniform move.

On the contrary, there are reasons for suspecting that teachers have quite different concepts of how teaching and nursing skills are learnt and what skills are needed for successful professional work. Some may be oriented towards the professional formation of the students while others may hold true that professional formations comes from a solid body of theoretical knowledge (18). Furthermore, the teacher training institutions have gone through a number of distinct phases, and during each phase the structure, the culture, the organization of knowledge and typical modes of social interaction have been different (19).

Taken together all these findings indicate that the professional training programmes, formerly blamed for having too fragmented curricula, now appear to be very fragmented with respect to the conceptions and ideas of the staff and the students of what is a proper curriculum. The efforts to realize an interdisciplinary approach now have to force a divergence of opinions and values that is more pronounced than before. (20)

The findings have illuminated the theory/practice-relation in professional training and the subject/discipline-relation as still mainly unsolved curriculum problems. The findings have also illuminated the heterogeneity among concepts of how professional training is to be organized and what is the teacher's task and desirable relations to the students.

So far the discussion has dealt with the relation between the written intentions in the syllabuses and curricula and their interpreters. The findings have, however, also thrown new light on the relation between what teachers plan and believe on one hand and what they actually do in a teaching situation on the other hand. (21)

Shulman has remarked that research on teaching has tended to ignore the issues of learning with respect to teachers. (22). The emphasis has, according to Shulman, been focused on how teachers manage their classrooms, organize activities, allocate times and turns, plan lessons etc. What is missed in research on teaching, according to Shulman, are questions about the content of the lessons taught, the questions asked and the explanations offered. The findings from the evaluation studies indicate that such a paradigm seems to be missing in the conceptual framework of the lecturers as well. The reforms in the training programmes have started a lot of planning activities on levels, that are either too abstract or too trivial. The lecturers appear to lack conceptual tools for viewing the reform implementation as problematic with respect to how intentions and conceptions can be converted into actual teaching and examining behaviour.

9. Who exerts influence?

It is obvious from the findings that the very nature of professional training programmes have given rise to a variety of curricular and teaching problems. The windened scope of action has brought about all the "classical" reactions that are to be expected in educational innovation processes. A variety of assumptions, paradigms, conceptions and ideas are mingled in the minds of a staff and have not only to be brought up to the surface but also to be melted toghether before real cooperation can take place. (23). Historical and ethnographical aspects of subjects and programmes must not be ignored when conflicts, compromises and processes of negotiations are to be interpreted and understood. (24). The new higher education context has, besides, highlighted the differences between cultures within the unified higher education system (25).

In the view of the frame-factor theory and the more general theories of reproduction (elaborated by Bernstein and Bourdieu) the function of the professional training in the wider societal context must be considered.

In the light of the rough outlines from the findings, the teachers, mainly the ones who teach the theoretical courses, appear to have considerable freedom in planning the courses. Their autonomy, in relation to the State, to the planning committees, to the professional fields and to their fellow-teachers on the staff, appear to be extensive. The teachers may or may not accept and support curriculum change, suggested by the State or by the programme committees, according to what will be the effects for themselves.
The teachers in the theoretical courses also appear to have considerable freedom in controlling the standards of the students. Even here, their autonomy appear to be extensive.
But is this the whole truth when you look at it more closely and examine the power structure beneath the surface?

Traditionally, teacher and nursing education was controlled rather strongly by the central government and its agencies and the programmes have been - and still are - subject to public interventions. Changes in aims and directions, in selection of contents and in choise of working methods have repeatedly been forced upon the training schools via political decisions, public opinions or scientific findings. The programmes have not been the "owners" of their own development.
In the new higher education organiszation, the schools themselves have more freedom and exert i wider influence. The suggestion is however that the State, despite decentralization, is still exerting a heavy influence on these programmes, but in a less obvious way than is expressed in the general study programme sullabuses.

The centralistic reform strategy of the Swedish educational system for the last 30 years has aimed at facilitating social, economic and geographic equality. The organization of the admission rules, for example, has been designed to support these aims. The educational system has, in addition, been used to achieve desired specific goals, which have been set up for various sectors of the labour market. Professional education has thus been used to introduce or accelerate changes in the corresponding professional fields. New ideas of how a profession is to be created or carried out and new attitudes, that are considered to be necessary in the

professional field, may then have been introduced into the professional training before it has been settled in the field.

Turning back to the professional training programmes, this means on the one hand that the teachers have gained a great degree of autonomy, paradoxically as a result of this particular reform strategy, which has reduced the bounds between training schools and professional fields and given the schools and the teachers the roles of spokesmen or missionaires in new and not yet achieved ways of carrying out professional work. On the other hand it means that the teachers have been subjected to conditions that they could not readily deduce from the goals of the programmes themselves. In addition to the training programmes used to promote changes in the professions, the educational system as a whole has been used to promote changes in Society. Rules and regulations in the educational system, i.e. the admission rules, are derived from interpretations of how to reach political goals and are thus sometimes experienced as contradictory to the aims of a particular programme. They are creating frames and other restrictions that in reality reduce the teachers' eagerness to use their received autonomy for planning and implementing in accordance with a new policy.

The discrepancy between what is planned and what is done is striking in the findings. The transfer from syllabus and curriculum via teaching activities to criteria for passing exams seems to have been laborious, frustrating and threatening. The teachers have hesitated over the last phase in the transferring process and felt that a controlling teacher behaviour would counteract their efforts to create a positive and supportive pedagogical setting. Besides, as has been suggested in the previous section, the teachers have not only estimated the students background knowledge as insufficient but also as forced upon them. The admission system and current trends in the students' demands of places have influenced the teaching and evaluaction activities as frame factors that have restricted the teachers by making their plans "unrealistic" to the actual population of students.

The problems involved in this kind of curriculum change, when the goals are extensive and, accordingly, abstract, have obviously been underestimated. The teachers have, more or less unconsciously, acted defensively in order not to disturb the collegial harmony and the balance between different disciplinary groups of teachers. They have avoided provoking situations which would expose the lack of agreement about how to move from a prescribed general policy to a concrete teaching activity. As a consequence they have also acted defensively towards the experienced heterogeneity among the students in order not to diverge from an at least overtly shared ideology and norm of standard among the staff members.

The conclusion is that the reforms have caused a lot of planning, curriculum writing, discussions of conceptions and values, but very little of local evaluations of the programmes and very little of cooperation and reflexion on examinations and testing. In other words the attention has been more drawn to the ideas in the reforms than to the realities in the classrooms and more to the coming than to the current activities in school and health care and more to what has been expected from the students than towards what has actually been performed by the students. On the rhetoric level, the space of action has been used for rather extensive changes, but when the words were to be translated into deeds, the teachers have proceeded cautiously.

Therefore, when offered a stimulating and challenging planning and teaching task, but faced with complicated curriculum and teaching problems, the solutions of which may destroy an established order between the staff and disturb desirable relations with the students, teachers may act defensively and thus avoid to use a widened space of action - quite contrary to their own ambitions and unforeseen by the State.

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